

Read and Lake Forest Corridors, New Orleans

New Orleans East, 70126 & 70127

The proposed study area is located within the New Orleans East neighborhood in the City of New Orleans. The study area comprises two major corridors, Read Boulevard and Lake Forest Boulevard and is approximately 69 hectares. It includes both major commercial thoroughfares as well as residential neighborhoods with both single-family and multi-family homes. The City's Master Plan identifies this area as an "opportunity site" given its potential for community-based redevelopment. The City's Regional Transit Authority (RTA) has established a transit hub at the intersection of these two streets and is studying the area as a main route for the establishment of a bus rapid transit system (BRT) in the near future.

The neighborhood, like much of New Orleans East, has experienced rapid change in the last four decades. The site has historically included the middle-class African American base of the City, however, has struggled with increased poverty, particularly since Hurricane Katrina devastated the neighborhood. The area has also struggled with commercial disinvestment since then, although new opportunities may soon

come to fruition. In addition, there are several city-owned properties, in this area, such as Joe Brown Park and several undeveloped city properties, which the City could use as cornerstones of a redevelopment strategy. The area has a disconnected network of bicycling and pedestrian paths in the area and the City hopes that new developments, such as the recently completed Lake Forest Manor, a 200-unit complex for seniors adjacent to this area, can be used to comprehensively plan a network of transportation options for residents in the area.

The City's primary goal is a community-based redevelopment strategy that improves the quality of life for residents through clean energy solutions and makes walking, biking, and transit options safe, connected and the preferred modes of transportation for residents. In the City's 2017 and updated 2022 Climate Action Plans the City has set a goal of 50% non-automobile trips by 2030 to reduce emissions from transportation. The City hopes this challenge will provide inspiration for redeveloping a key portion of the City that is geographically separated by the Industrial Canal.



Approx. site area: (20 words max.)
69 hectares (0.27 square miles)

Key Information: (30 words max.)
This area of the City is approximately 88% African-American and the average household income is \$43,169, compared to \$73,963 citywide.

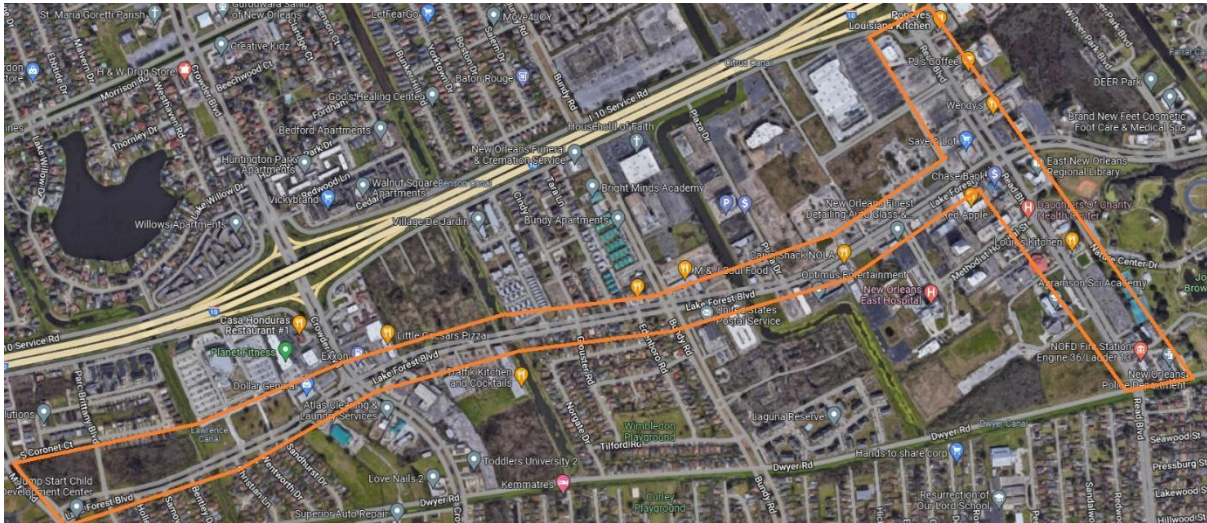
Priority areas & main expectations: (60 words max.)

The main priorities for the city include:

- Community needs are reflected within the design.

- Redevelopment increases access to key amenities and decreases vehicle emissions.
- Reducing household energy burden via the development of distributed energy resources (DERs)
- Creating reliable, connected, and safe transportation options via Complete Streets design and Bus Rapid Transit
- Integrating nature-based solutions (NBS) such as green infrastructure to hold stormwater.

Presentation of the site and development expectations



The study area, located in New Orleans East, an area of the City developed in the 1960s and 1970s, is located 8-10 miles northeast of the New Orleans Central Business District (CBD), the largest concentration of jobs in the New Orleans region. The area is connected to the historic core of the City by both Interstate 10 and US 90, both of which also offer public transit bus service from the Regional Transit Authority (RTA). New Orleans East, including the study area, is separated from other parts of New Orleans by the Industrial Canal (Inner Harbor Navigational Canal) which presents transportation challenges due to the limited number (3: 1 fixed span bridge and 2 movable bridges) of roadway crossings over the canal.

The City seeks to spur redevelopment of the area, especially several large blighted and underused parcels that have languished since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Several large public assets are intended to serve as an anchor to the redevelopment efforts, including Joe Brown Park, the New Orleans East Regional Library, the New Orleans Hospital, and the New Orleans East Transit Center. The City is working with the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) as a [Communities-LEAP](#) site to study the feasibility of implementing neighborhood-level microgrids in several areas of the City, including this one, and would like to implement a community solar project in the study area as well. Key City facilities for both a microgrid and community solar projects would be the Joe Brown Rec Center, Joe Brown Pool, NOPD 7th District, NOFD Station 36, among others. The city encourages development ideas which incorporate distributed energy resources (DERs) as well as battery storage to increase resilience against extended power outages.

There are three City-owned parcels at the western end of the Lake Forest corridor (see map below, City-owned properties in purple) that are currently overgrown lots that could serve as cornerstones for developments which encourage multi-modal transportation options and transit-oriented communities.



Beyond the redevelopment of public and privately owned parcels, the City seeks to improve the public rights-of-way to better meet the transportation needs of existing residents. The RTA has identified the Lake Forest corridor as a potential route for a future [Bus Rapid Transit](#) line that connects the study area to the CBD. Consistent with the City's Complete Streets policies, the City wants to improve access and safety for all modes of transportation and seek new ways to create transportation options, such as utilizing drainage rights-of-way for greenway development.

Portions of the study area have also been noted as a [food desert](#). The City seeks innovative ways to address food insecurity issues which cause residents to travel greater distances for necessities. A cohesive submission will provide connected transportation options to developments like the Lake Forest Manor at the upper end of the study area with amenities like community gardens, green buildings with resilient power sources, nature-based solutions, and flexible community spaces that serve a range of community needs.



City climate priorities and specific environmental challenges

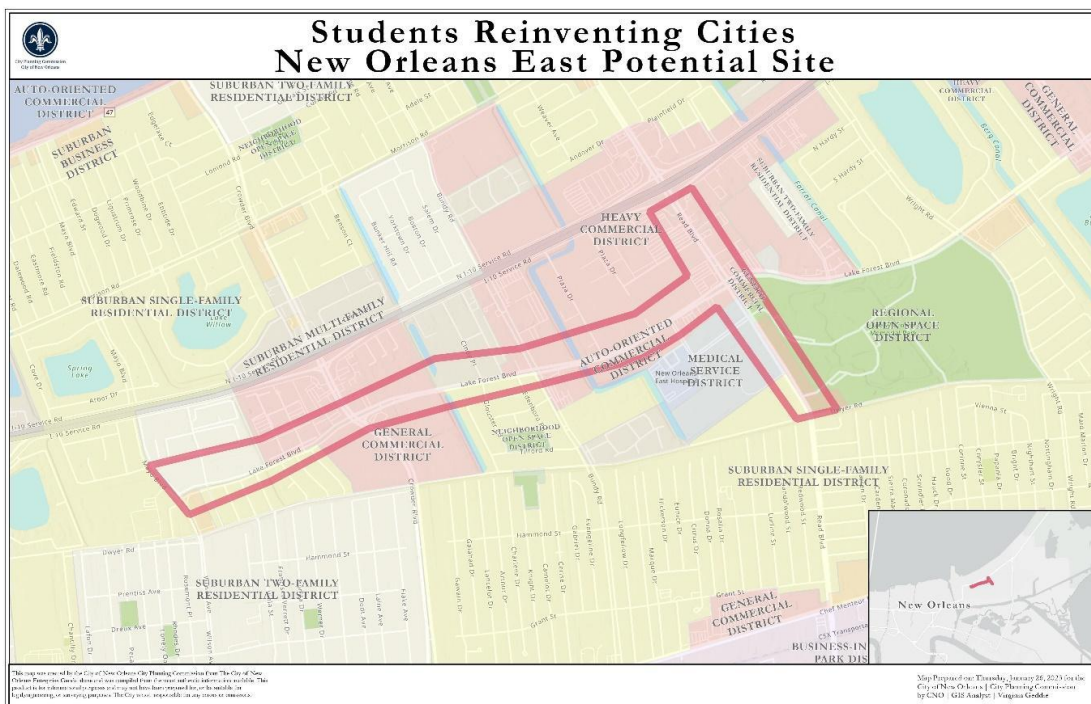
The City released its updated Climate Action Plan in December of 2022 which can be found [here](#). The Plan calls for a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035 and net-zero emissions by 2050. Most of the reduction in emissions will be made through renewable energy usage and smarter transportation planning.

The use of solar should be integrated into the plan. To reduce emissions from energy, the plan calls for an increase of local renewable development on both public and privately owned buildings, including a specific goal of 255 MW of solar by 2035. The plan also calls for the development of more solar farms and community solar projects. As mentioned previously, including battery storage with any of these solar projects would be encouraged to improve the study area's energy resilience to natural disasters.

Mobility and public transit are also integral to the plan. A major goal is to reduce the number of trips that use automobiles below 50% by 2030. The plan envisions expanding the usage of public transit and bike lanes to allow for additional choices of transit. The plan also calls for expanding our electric vehicle charging infrastructure to encourage the adoption of low-emission vehicles.

One major problem for the city is the “heat island effect”, where portions of the city can be more than eight degrees Fahrenheit hotter than other portions of the city, mainly due to a lack of trees and green space. The city plans to expand the tree canopy throughout every neighborhood of the city and to use nature-based solutions to mitigate heat waves and flooding. Students should consider nature-based solutions including green infrastructure like rain gardens and drainage lagoons with native plants and trees to naturally hold stormwater.

Specific planning rules and regulations



Zoning Regulations

The site is centrally located in New Orleans East with a history of accommodating large-scale commercial uses such as the Plaza Mall, office buildings, and big box retail stores. Zoning regulations in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) and lot sizes of the area still reflect that historic development pattern. Most of this area is zoned C-1 General Commercial or C-2 or C-3 Auto-Oriented Commercial. These zoning districts favor large, higher-intensity commercial uses, with limited opportunity for new residential development. Dwellings above ground-floor commercial uses are permitted in some instances. Last year, the City adopted a Voluntary Inclusionary Zoning policy (VIZ) which permits the city-wide development of multifamily housing with more than 10 units if at least 10% of units are maintained as affordable rental housing. Higher-density development may be permitted in this area through this mechanism, which also allows developers to seek density bonuses, relief from parking requirements, and other exemptions in exchange for long-term affordable housing.

Generally, The C-2 and C-3 zoning designations are intended for auto-oriented uses located along arterial streets. There are additional design provisions in Chapter 15 of the CZO intended to reduce the visual impact of large parking lots and support pedestrian and multi-modal activity. Students may consider recommending additional zoning regulations that may be applied through an overlay to enhance the pedestrian experience and ensure new development is compatible with safe, complete, and walkable streets while ensuring higher-density development along Lake Forest Boulevard corridor is buffered from the I-10 and blends with the surrounding low-density residential communities.

At the west end of the study area, the current S-RD Suburban Two-family Residential zoning permits residential development of single-family, two-family, and in some instances, small multifamily development up to 4 units, with limited opportunity for commercial or mixed-use development. In these areas, the CZO permits the residential development of Small Multi-family housing in exchange for one affordable rental unit for 10 years. This zoning applies to the City-owned parcels at Mayo Road and Lake Forest Boulevard.

Ideas and recommendations for the Lake Forest Blvd. and Read Corridors should broadly conform to the above rules and regulations and leverage existing incentives (such as density bonuses and parking reductions available through the city's VIZ ordinance). That said, creative ideas that amend or enhance the above rules and regulations and enhance climate action goals will certainly be considered.

Applicable zoning districts are determined by viewing the City's official zoning map at property.nola.gov and selecting "zoning" under the layers tab. The Property Viewer will also provide a link to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance with the regulations that apply. The zoning regulations may also be accessed through czo.nola.gov. The Property Viewer also provides links to the New Orleans Assessor's website where a photo, ownership, valuation, and sale history can be found.

New Orleans Master Plan

New Orleans has a [Master Plan](#) (officially named the Plan for the 21st Century) that was originally adopted in 2010 and has since undergone two amendment processes. A key component of the Master Plan is the Future Land Use Map. The New Orleans Home Rule Charter requires that land use actions be consistent with the Land Use Plan chapter of the Master Plan, which contains the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). This map can be viewed with the Property Viewer by selecting "Future Land Use" under the layers tab. The

Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance contains an appendix that serves as a guide for which zoning districts may be considered “consistent” with the FLUM designations.

In early 2023, the City Planning Commission will be considering some amendments to the Future Land Use Map including some that apply to the study area. If approved, the amendments would likely offer some different zoning options for part of the study area, including more mixed-use with residential. Regardless of whether the FLUM amendments are approved, the recommendations provided through the competition may be used to inform potential land use designations in the future.

The Master Plan’s Land Use Plan chapter also contains several sites throughout the city that have been identified as “opportunity sites.” The #1 opportunity site coincides very nicely with the proposed study area. During the original development of the Master Plan, the planning team conducted market research to determine the demand for important opportunity sites which for this area found “substantial potential for high-quality redevelopment, assuming community-based planning to ensure” that the area is not redeveloped in a piece-meal fashion. Housing, office, and retail market potentials were included in the analysis and a transit-oriented “neighborhood center” was recommended. A 2004 *New Orleans East Renaissance Plan* was referenced in the opportunity site analysis and may also be a useful reference for this project (a copy is available from the New Orleans City Planning Commission.)

Language requirements

Proposals must be submitted in English.